



Sam Brownback

UNITED STATES SENATOR ■ KANSAS

303 Hart Senate Office Building • Washington DC 20510 • (202) 224-8950

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 22, 1999

CONTACT ERIK HOTMIRE

BROWNBACK CALLS FOR UNEQUIVOCAL U.S. SUPPORT FOR GEORGIA

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback today in response to questions about recent Russian Foreign Ministry accusations directed at Georgia, and recent Russian bombings of the Georgian border town of Shatili in which several Georgian border guards were wounded, said:

“It is time the U.S. administration made it clear to Russia that U.S. support for Georgia is unequivocal and that any further military actions and attempts to intimidate Georgia are absolutely unacceptable and will carry a heavy cost.

“The Russian government is using the war in Chechnya as an excuse to intimidate and punish Georgia for its demands for full independence and sovereignty; for its refusal to allow Russian troops to use its territory to wage war against innocent civilians; for its demands to have unwanted Russian military bases removed from its sovereign territory; for its commitment to democracy and western values; for its pro-western positions; and for its support and desire to join NATO.

“The accusations that Georgia is working against Russian interests in Chechnya are simply unfounded and malicious in intent. In the last ten days alone Georgia has deported a number of foreigners who were attempting to transit Georgia to join the Chechen fighters. And President Shevardnadze’s record on fighting and speaking out against terrorism is unblemished.

“As a result of the war in Chechnya, there are now more than 5000 refugees in Georgia, a country which can barely afford to feed and take care of their own internal refugees. This, combined with threatened economic sanctions, could severely damage an already shaky economy and undermine the stability in Georgia, specially as these threatened sanctions come during the cold of winter. Russia must cease and desist in its blatant attempts to bully the Georgian nation.

“The U.S. administration should be strong in its support of Georgia and should be preparing to offer assistance in every field necessary to help it weather these unprovoked actions by Russia. We need to make it clear that threats against Georgian sovereignty and against President Shevardnadze are absolutely unacceptable.”

Brownback is the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.